

Title: Sacramento River Public Information and Education #1006
Applicant: Sac River Discovery Center

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A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND APPROACH

This project will provide a public information/education component of CALFED work to ensure that the improvements on the river and the maintenance of a sustainable, balanced, healthy river system are understood and supported by the general public. It will provide a place and programs for the California public, educators, volunteers, students and other participants to learn about the value and importance of the water resources of the Sacramento River. The programs will be incorporated into schools throughout the watershed. It embodies a collaborative effort in which federal and state agencies, agriculture and timber, fisheries and environmental interests, schools and colleges, private groups and individuals work together to tell the story of the river, the land it borders, and the human and biotic resources that provide so much to California.

Phase I of the development of this plan is well underway. The Sacramento River Discovery Center (SRDC) provides services for the general public and school groups.

Phase II, to be funded jointly through this proposal and matching funds, will allow:

Task 1: Expansion of facilities to allow for expanded public events, teacher trainings and student learning experiences.

Task 2: Expansion of the teacher training program and other education/information programs to broaden the overall programs at SRDC

Task 3: Expansion of the high school/college natural resource academy to include planning and development of the bird monitoring and training program with emphasis on migratory birds. A partnership with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory has been initiated and will be developed to include ongoing student and volunteer monitoring of birds throughout the watershed, especially in relation to revegetation projects along the river and, ultimately, throughout the watershed. This proposal is the next step in a system-wide, coordinated information/education plan incorporating small, grass roots satellite centers tied to the Watershed Conservancies, community colleges, state universities, University of California, private non-profits educational facilities, and local efforts from the headwaters to the mouth of the Sacramento River. It will continue the direction and momentum supported by CVPIA, EPA, PG&E, and other public and private partners and help to establish linkages to other watershed education programs funded through CVPIA, EPA, CALFED, and many other sources.

Phase III, to be completed with future funding:

Help establish River Discovery Centers throughout the watershed.

WORK COMPLETED (Phase I):

The Sacramento River Discovery Center is a private, non-profit dedicated to public information and education, started with funding from CVPIA. 46 public and private groups participated actively to plan the vision and implement first steps for SRDC and many more have become partners in the continuing growth of that vision. The Discovery Center is located on 488 acres of public land managed jointly by Mendocino National Forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation adjacent to the Red Bluff Diversion Dam. It's history of bringing together diverse groups of people to provide a balanced view of the river has resulted in great strides toward development of the Center.

- Temporary Modular Building: open to the general public 6 days per week, hosts monthly evening programs, and regularly scheduled events.
- School programs include day programs and overnight camping experiences with all activities tied to watershed education.

- High School/College Natural Resources Academy in which students commit a minimum of 2 class periods per day to learn about, teach younger students, and develop and implement projects to benefit the watershed. Examples include water quality monitoring, bird list development, fish studies and many others.
- Teacher training program/curriculum materials for outdoor education camps on site; regular teacher inservices implemented.
- Sacramento River Discovery Center Non-Profit Board managing SRDC business.
- Group campground for 100 people at one time; with cabins, restrooms, showers, and a covered eating and cooking area to support group activities.
- Interpretive trails through a variety of habitats demonstrating the complexity of the riparian system.
- 7 acre pond and wetland, and adjacent 6 acre riparian planting completed through a partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Board and a local heavy equipment contractor.
- 40 acre oak woodland (*Quercus lobata*) completed in partnership with P.G. & E. and the U.S. Forest Service.
- Expansion of educational displays and programming with support of the Bureau of Reclamation Water Conservation Education program.

B. PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

For the past two years, our first two years of operation, we have been unable to serve nearly 1000 students who requested our programs. We have created a need for in-depth watershed educational experiences and request the help of CALFED to best meet that need.

With CALFED Funding (note: multiple year funding commitment is not necessary to advance the program. It would simply assure the viable start-up. Even single year funding will preclude the potential demise of the programs and will establish a base for successfully seeking other funding.

- Day use and camping programs on site will support up to 100 per day for day use and an equal number per day for camping programs with additional facilities. Architectural plans completed with year one funding. First phase building initiated. First Phase building complete with year 2 funding. Second Phase building initiated. Building complete with year 3 funding. This can be accomplished with minimal funds because we have local commitments from businesses and individuals to provide expertise and materials to help with the actual building project. With the knowledge that the process is as important as the product, we envision a community "barn raising" to expand our facilities to meet the needs of the community. This will assure that this place for learning about the watershed truly belongs to the community.
- Expanded teacher training to assure long-term watershed studies which support in-depth lessons prior to on-site day-use and camping experiences. This will incorporate broad understanding of watershed systems for all students, as opposed to episodic, field trip of the week, experiences. Learning about and understanding the complexity of the systems will promote watershed stewardship and build a citizenry supportive of watershed management. Expand the program to include 2 day training per year for 40 teachers per session.